1.2. Writing system and written form

The first attempt to introduce a writing system for Even was made in the middle of the 19th century by the Russian missionary S.Popov. In 1858 he published "The Tungus ABC with prayers", written in a simplified Church Slavonic script. This textbook, however, has, apparently, never been put into practical use.

The first writing system that gained some currency was introduced in the early 1930s. Originally, it was based on the Latin alphabet, from 1937 on on the Cyrillic alphabet. In 1958 several special letters (e.g., ө, ŋ) were added to the Even alphabet. It should be noted, however, that in view of dialect disparity the adopted writing system is not equally suitable for speakers of all dialects. Therefore in the 1980s there was an attempt to change Even spelling system in order to make it more similar to the Yakut and, consequently, more comprehensible for speakers of Western dialects, resident in Yakutia. The proposed changes, however, have gained only a restricted currency.

Standard ("literary") Even is based on Eastern dialects, in particular, on the Ola dialect, spoken in the Magadan region. Standard Even has not yet achieved recognition as a means of communication among speakers of different dialects. It is less intelligible for speakers of Western dialects and is largely restricted to the written form of language.

Even

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